



**Police – Private Partnership to Tackle Metal Theft – PoI-PRIMETT
First Prevention and Deterrence Expert User Group (P&D EUG)**

**The Cutler's Hall, Sheffield, UK
Thursday 11th November 2010**

Attendees

Bernie August	BT Openreach	BA
Dominic Wood	BT Group	DW
Peter Ramsay	Yorkshire Water	PR
John Barker	United Utilities	JB
Andrew Heeley	TATA	AH
Ian Steedman	TATA	IS
Stevie Elliot	TATA	SE
Ross Bartley	BIR	RB
Ian Hetherington	BMRA	IH
David Ransom	PUAC	DR
Helen Parr	PUAC	HP
Marilyne Hopkinson	PUAC	MH
Barry Stones	PUAC	BS
Joanne Sanders	PUAC	JS
Sergio Bianchi	Agenfor Lombardia	SB
Paolo Quercia	Agenfor Lombardia	PQ
Cristina Bonafe	FCVRE	CB
George Stefanos	Georama	GS
Lubov Panayotova	European Institute	LP
Melina Stefanova	European Institute	MK

Apologies

Rob Dakin	AXA Insurance	RD
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Minutes and Actions

Introduction

The first PoI-PRIMETT Prevention and Deterrence (P&D) Expert User Group (EUG) met on Thursday, 11th November in Sheffield, UK.

David Ransom (DR), PoI-PRIMETT's Project Director welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced People United Against Crime, the lead partner in the project. Each member provided a brief introduction of their organisation.

DR presented an overview of PoI-PRIMETT's aims and objectives and advised the EUG that this three year project has a total investment of €1.25 million. The overall aim is to reduce the level of metal theft across Europe and leave a legacy of good practice that benefits all.



EUG members

Each EUG member explained the reasons for their interest in the project, what problems they are currently experiencing and what they are doing to tackle metal theft. They also clarified what they wish to achieve by participating in Pol-PRIMETT. DR commented that by sharing each member's experience of metal theft, the EUGs will be in a better position to develop a strategy to tackle metal theft. It was agreed that confidentiality issues will always have to be taken into consideration.

BT

BA reported that metal theft is a UK-wide problem with no specific region being targeted; hotspots will vary. The South East of the UK is worst hit at the current time. There is a 30% difference between metal thefts reported by the police and incidents reported by BT engineers. BT operates a 24 hour help desk for reporting crime. Engineering teams report incidents of metal theft direct to the police. BT suffers from malicious damage and theft of cables from depots. The major impact to BT is on live network cable. BT engineers are not dealing with scheduled work if they are fixing problems caused by metal theft. The cost of copper has a direct impact on the level of malicious damage BT suffers.

BA informed the EUG that BT has already undertaken some research on metal theft and is willing to share the findings with the project. During a four month research exercise BT established that there were in excess of 4300 scrap dealers operating in the UK.

DW pointed out that not all key stakeholders are represented at the meeting e.g. utility companies, network rail, insurance companies etc
HP confirmed all key UK stakeholders had been contacted and had either not responded or could not attend for a variety of reasons. PUAC will maintain contact with all key UK stakeholders to ensure their participation. Pol-PRIMETT partners from Spain, Italy, Greece and Bulgaria will also identify private sector organisations to participate in Pol-PRIMETT to ensure a transnational approach to this problem and BIR will provide a European perspective via their membership.
HP also explained that because of the geographic location of Pol-PRIMETT events across EU partner countries, attendees at the EUG meetings will vary.
DW asked for a comprehensive list so all EUG members know who the key stakeholders are. PUAC will provide this for the UK and update the list as membership grows across Europe.

BA described a 'flagging' system that has been developed which identifies damage to BT equipment that is as a result of criminal activity. It was reported that metal theft costs BT approximately £6 million per year but a true figure is probably 3-4 times higher. Metal theft is a big economic cost to the whole of BT which has to pay out for loss of service. BT is currently suffering about 130 live attacks per month. The police are heavily engaged with BT and there have been 300 arrests for theft of BT assets to date in 2010. A network integrity unit engages with the police at a local level. The police now have greater visibility; metal theft SPOCs in many forces and days of action. The number of actual convictions is poor with cases being lost at prosecution.

BT has produced a reference booklet for the police use so they know what to look for and what questions to ask when they see something suspicious or when they are investigating metal theft.

BT has invested £1.5 million in an intelligence cell for covert surveillance which undertakes a lot of police work.

BT is hoping to link up with Crimestoppers next year to improve levels of intelligence.

It is important to talk to the police about the impact of metal theft in communities

BT has a media strategy to tackle metal theft and stated that the press are increasingly interested in this issue.

BT suggested that border agencies worked together to tackle metal theft and requested that this be explored in WP2. **Action**

BA recommended that Pol-PRIMETT develops a media strategy that gives clear messages. It is important to blame the criminals and not the markets. **Action**

Yorkshire Water

PR confirmed that metal theft is a big problem for Yorkshire Water and stressed that there are currently no strong deterrents for metal thieves as the chance of conviction is minimal. For criminals, this is a low risk activity.

Criminals are becoming more accomplished about how to cut live cables. There is even information about this available on the internet.

Yorkshire Water is suffering theft of lead from roofs of their buildings. Manhole covers are being stolen as are lightening conductors from water towers. Yorkshire water is now replacing these with aluminium conductors. There are serious safety issues as live cables are being stolen.

There are also serious threats to communities. A sewage works have been attacked and service compromised. Yorkshire Water is very heavily regulated and suffers heavy fines if sewage leaks into rivers.

Yorkshire water have had contractors involved in criminal activity

Current deterrents include:

- The increased use of aluminium to try and reduce metal theft
- The use of Redweb security marking – marks the thief as well as the asset
- The installation of rapid deploy cameras
- The installation of site intrusion detection systems – provides an early warning of attack
- Experimentation with the use of private security and surveillance companies due to poor police response
- Target hardening strategies
- Engaging with some scrap metal dealers

Yorkshire Water believes there is between 20% - 40% under-reporting of metal theft. Metal theft impacts negatively on operatives and morale is very poor.

Yorkshire Water collates data for Yorkshire only

PR reported that the relationship with the police is very inconsistent with no one wanting to take ownership of the problem. Police response has been particularly poor over the last 8 months. Also, there are huge inconsistencies in the way metal

theft is recorded which makes it hard to collate data and establish a complete picture of the problem. **Lobbying activity – work with ACPO to get a consistent response**

DR suggested that a possible way forward to get a swifter and more effective response from the police would be to shape the nature of the crime (metal theft) and how the private sector reports these crimes to fit with the polices' pressure points and performance measures.

United Utilities

JB reported that United Utilities is being very heavily hit and suffers around 6 metal theft incidents a week each costing from £40k to £150K. United Utilities also has to pay fines on top of this. Thieves have even stolen fences and gates. One sub-station was attacked 29 times in one month

On one occasion there were six separate attacks in one night but the police would only issue one crime reference number.

United Utilities biggest loss was in 2007 when the travelling community occupied a site and destroyed the site completely over a three day period. They cut up equipment with a value of £2 million.

Travellers occupying sites continues to be a problem

Police have the powers to move travellers on before they cause damage but the police are resistant to using these powers due to travellers being a minority ethnic group

There is a need to implement an effective reporting system but this would require a dedicated staff resource. This would give an opportunity to analyse data and identify trends.

RB advised the group that the EC has issued a new directive(Enterprise) relating to underground critical infrastructure stating that data must be openly available. The private sector would resist requests for this information due to vulnerability issues and would lobby against it. **Separate topic to be explored**

TATA Steel

AH reported that TATA Steel has significant problems with metal theft suffering theft at all levels. Thieves are cutting high voltage cable and suffering injury. The cost of metal theft to TATA Steel over 12 months across the Yorkshire and Humber region is about £400k but they suspect there is around 50% under-reporting with many incidents unreported. There is endemic poor reporting in the manufacturing industry. Contractors are a big threat as it is believed they steal stock. TATA has also identified ex employees as a risk. **Separate topic to be explored**

Criminals will drive trailers into yards and load up metals suggesting that organised criminal gangs are involved. Scrap metal /alloy is regularly stolen.

TATA is very reactive and will only respond after a theft. Generally TATA have experienced a poor attitude from the police who seem to view it as a minor crime and expect manufacturers to 'cope' with the problem.

There is a need for the private sector to broaden their alignment with the police

Utility Companies

A day of operations to tackle metal theft had been organised but on the day, no police officers were available. The private sector was asked to pay for overtime to enable the day of action to take place.

Bureau for International Re-cycling (BIR)

RB asked is there is room for manoeuvre within the work packages so that the project can be flexible in its approach to tackling this problem. HP and DR confirmed that there is scope within the project for a flexible approach.

BMRA

IH explained that scrap metal dealers are very significant victims of metal theft. This crime can be very highly organised and IH described how thieves recently stole a crane which was then used to access a site to steal a vehicle that was loaded with converters.

Organised criminal gangs are now setting up businesses to facilitate metal theft. The police view this type of criminal activity as having very low priority. The private sector needs to rely on increased prevention strategies.

BRMA is very involved with the police and utility companies. BRMA members are a great source of intelligence and need a positive relationship with the police. BRMA recognises the need to work with the police and utility companies.

IH explained that BRMA members (legitimate scrap dealers) need to be able to recognise stolen metals.

There are 1400 licensed operators in the UK. These are listed on the Environment Agency website.

BA reiterated BT's research finding that they identified 4300 scrap dealers in operation and probably an additional 2000 that they are unaware of.

There are 42000 registered operators across Europe.

RB advised the meeting that in 2008 a Waste Framework European Directive was issued that stipulates that all waste operators have to be registered or permitted.

The police and authorities are often not aware of the relevant legislation.

Agenfor Lombardia, Italy – Work Package 2 Leader - Research

SB commented that Pol-PRIMETT will endeavour to establish a complete picture of what is happening across Europe to trigger metal theft.

Georama – Greece

GS reported that 5 years ago there was no mention of metal theft in Greece so it is difficult to report accurately on the level of the problem. However, metal theft in Greece is probably on a smaller scale than that in the UK or Italy.

Georama will endeavour to establish the true position of metal theft in Greece for future meetings.

GS was able to report that theft of cables, a bridge, metal from the electricity company and copper wire from the railway system in Northern Greece all posed a safety issues for travellers.

Bells from churches are also being stolen.

GS reported a big problem with gypsies and Soviet Union ex-patriates. Greece does not have any data to indicate where the materials are going.

Georama will investigate some good practices that are happening in Greece so that they can be shared with other countries.

The Greek police do not record separate figures for metal theft, so Georama will investigate this also.

European Institute – Bulgaria

LP reported that the problem of metal theft in Bulgaria is more or less the same as other countries have.

It is a big problem for the railways and communication companies. In 1994 there were changes to the legislation and currently, the authorities are trying to get the penalties for metal theft changed.

Unlicensed Scrap Dealers

The issue of unlicensed scrape dealers was discussed.

RB informed the meeting that all legitimate operators record sales and they are published by **Eurostat**. This information is available for public view on their website.



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DR welcomed the LEA EUG and the P&D EUG to the Joint EUG meeting and provided a model of the structure of the project DR also explained the role of the Joint EUGs.

A brief summary of the LEA and the P&D EUG meetings that had been held in the morning were presented by Ashley Croft, BTP and David Ransom, PUAC.

WP3 – LEA EUG

AC presented a brief overview of the LEA EUG meeting.

It was clear that all Member States shared common problems regarding metal theft. Identifying the role of organised criminal gangs in metal theft is vital in PoI-PRIMETT so that this information can form part of the National Threat Problem Profile for each Member State.

In the UK, ACPO has produced two Good Practice Guides that will be shared within PoI-PRIMETT. These can be developed so they become a European Good Practice Guide.

Other points discussed during the LEA EUG were:

- The production of a training package for police
- The need for research into legislation relating to metal theft
- The need to develop a database to support PoI-PRIMETT activities
- To establish whether CrimeStoppers / CrimeWatch initiatives exist in other European countries
- To establish the level of cross border offending; movement of stolen metals / movement of organised criminals
- The usage of containers by organised criminal gangs

WP2 – Research

SB presented a proposed research model to be used in PoI-PRIMETT including how data will be collected, what questions would be asked for research purposes and how the research would be analysed and disseminated.

BH, South Yorkshire Police suggested using a local police force as a model for collecting data as regional data regarding metal theft is hard to obtain.

BA asked for research to be undertaken into the sentencing of offenders and re-offenders.



PQ presented some Italian statistical data including.

- Crime links to the travelling community
- Organised criminal activity
- Exporting of metals
- Length of sentencing
- Current deterrents

RB states that the **European Commission is issuing various communications** that may be useful for research purposes in Pol-PRIMETT.

BA informed the meeting that part of BT's media strategy is to communicate messages to the criminal community, sending out simple messages of what will happen when they are caught and what steps is being taken to deter criminal activity. This also promotes the support that organisations are providing to tackle criminal activity.

GS raised the question of materials available to give to stakeholders.

SJ questioned what involvement the UK Crime Prosecution Service (CPS) and equivalent European organisations will have in Pol-PRIMETT. This has yet to be decided.

Close

DR provided a summary of the events of the day, requested that evaluation forms be completed and thanked all present for their attendance and participation.

Venue and date of next Pol-PRIMETT events

The next EUG meetings will be held in Rome, Italy on Tuesday, 29th March 2010 followed by the first Pol-PRIMETT Conference on Wednesday, 30th March. Further details will follow shortly.

Actions

Action	By whom	Deadline
All EUG members to provide relevant information / findings for research purposes to WP3 and WP4 leaders who will collate and send to WP2 leader, Agenfor	All	Ongoing
BT to share findings from research undertaken	BA	10 th December 2010
BT to share police reference booklet with Pol-PRIMETT	BA	10 th December 2010
Establish metal theft as a priority for LEA's - aim to shape the nature of metal theft to fit police 'pressure points'	PUAC / BTP	Ongoing
Conduct research into the sentencing of offenders and re-offenders of metal theft	PUAC / BTP / Agenfor	Ongoing

Establish information available on the Eurostat website	PUAC / Agenfor	31 st January 2011
Establish information available fro the Environment Agency website	Agenfor / BTP / PUAC	31 st January 2011
Undertake research into EU Directives relating to registration / permitting of waste operators (Wasteframer). Data available on INPO	PUAC / Agenfor	31 st January 2011
Undertake research into relevant EC communications relating to metal theft	PUAC / Agenfor	31 st January 2011
Establish the possibility of a system that informs scrap metal dealers / recyclers where metal they are buying has come from	BTP / PUAC + relevant partners	Ongoing
Georama to establish the true position of metal theft in Greece	GS / Agenfor	28 th February 2010
Georama to establish existing 'good practice' in Greece	GS	28 th February 2010
Georama to establish how the police record metal theft	GS	28 th February 2010
Dates to be confirmed for future EUG meetings	PUAC	10 th December 2010
Improve knowledge of the movement of stolen scrap metal throughout Europe.	All	
Share good practice and techniques so we leave a legacy for Europe	All	
Establish how much theft is happening at each level of criminality	Agenfor	March 2011
Enhance collaboration between LEA's and Private Sector organisations	All partners and EUG members	Ongoing
Develop a training package for police	BTP	TBC
Organise a European day of Action 17 th -19 th October 2011	BTP	October 2011
Establish the involvement of Crown Prosecution Service and EU equivalent	BTP	31 st December 2010
Establish how to internationalise research activities in Pol-PRIMETT	Agenfor	31 st January 2011
Provide list of all Pol-PRIMETT stakeholders	PUAC	Ongoing
Carefully consider media strategy to target messages to criminals	FCVRE	Ongoing
Produce generic brochure for promoting Pol-PRIMETT to stakeholders	FCVRE	31 st December 2010